COMMANDERS DIGEST

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MENU

FOOD SERVICE TODAY in the Armed Forces

A LA CARTE

Who Fills the DoD Shopping Basket?

Practically all the food consumed by American Servicemen is provided by the Defense Supply Agency (DSA). DSA's Defense Personnel Support Center (DPSC) in Philadelphia buys carloads of meat and fields of vegetables as well as millions of canned items each year. Insuring a continued supply of the many food items needed to feed Americans in uniform means coping with tough marketplace problems.

During the past 18 months, procurement of food for the Armed Forces has been an especially challenging one. In 1973, and continuing to the present, DPSC food buyers have had difficulty in obtaining DoD food requirements due to crop shortages, shortages of materials used for packaging and packing, and difficulties in obtaining tin plate. Associated with these problems have been the rising prices of both the food products themselves and the costs of producing, packaging, and transporting them to the Military Services.

These difficulties were overcome, in part, by contact with industry to improve communications and discuss mutual problems. For example, in facing the problem of securing canned fruits and vegetables, contracting teams visited many firms in the fall and winter of 1973 to assure clearer understanding of mutual problems and to negotiate contracts on the spot for products competitively solicited but unobtainable earlier.

DPSC representatives also participated in various industry association meetings to encourage industry participation in DPSC procurements. Consultations were held with the U.S. Department of Agriculture as well as industry to determine market conditions.

On the basis of the intelligence gained, DPSC in April 1974 suggested to the Military Services that certain canned fruits and vegetable products which were more plentiful be substituted for those which were not available or more difficult to obtain.

For example, DPSC proposed and the Services agreed to accept:

- Cream style white corn and/or golden whole corn as a substitute for golden cream style corn, white whole grain corn as a substitute for golden whole grain corn
- Grade C cherries if no Grade A was available.
- Pineapple products packed in natural juice (first preference) or light syrup (second preference) as a substitute for heavy syrup pack.
- Catsup containing minimum of 29 per cent solids in place of 33 per cent solids.

In other food items, commercial packaging was substituted for military packaging requirements in order to reduce costs and obtain coverage. However, there is a limit to the degree of this type of substitution, particularly for items destined to transfer at sea for the Navy or for use on board submarines with special storage problems.

A commodity currently causing great concern is sugar. Prices have skyrocketed. On January 10, 1974 raw sugar was available at $.0940 per lb. On October 16, 1974 the price was $.3775—an increase of over 300 per cent in a nine month period. This impacts on many food items requiring sugar, such as canned fruits, jams and jellies, dessert, cake and ice cream mixes. DPSC attempts to cope with this situation by careful cost and/or price analysis of the item being bought and, like the prudent housewife, frequently must forego buying a given item. Last year DPSC did not buy such products as cherry jam, dessert powder, frozen cherries, and canned blackberries because of excessive prices. At the same time the Services were offered lower cost, less expensive substitutes such as grape jam in lieu of cherry.

In summary, DPSC has been watching prices and market trends closely to insure that requirements are timed for procurement when the product is most abundant. DPSC proceeds with extreme caution when it feels prices are not fair and reasonable, taking into consideration urgency of need and the realities of the rising cost of all goods and services at the time of purchase.

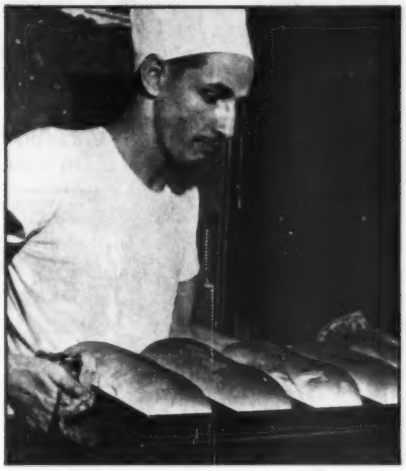
THE IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY FOOD TO A MODERN NAVY

Food is, and always has been, one of man's most important basic needs. The modern-day sailor is no different, even in today's advanced technological environment.

Although food service is not considered by some as sophisticated as many of the Navy's other on-going programs, it is one of the most important, since it has a direct affect upon the health and welfare of one of the Navy's most important resources—its enlisted men and women.

The Navy's food program for enlisted personnel is delegated to the Naval Supply Systems Command, which in turn administers the program through the Navy Food Service Systems Office (NAVFSSO). Captain Ruth M. Tomsuden, SC, USN, is the commanding officer of NAVFSSO and has the responsibility for ensuring continuity of the Navy's food service program.

Navy food service goals and efforts are based on a solid appreciation for the importance of proper feeding to overall military efficiency. The relationship between good food and high morale has long been recognized. It was said centuries ago that "Seamen love food above everything else." This may be academic and perhaps it only applies while at sea; but, be that as it may, food is a generator of roses or brickbats, regardless of whether the recipients are at sea or ashore.



Change has characterized the Navy's feeding program during the last two decades. After World War II, subsistence operations increased in such complexity that a separate office was established to manage all Navy food service activities. Since that time, and continuing now under its present title, the Navy Food Service Systems Office has administered all enlisted feeding operations. The role of NAVFSSO is to exercise technical direction and financial control over all Navy enlisted dining facilities. The importance of that mission cannot be overstated in light of todays challenges at the budget table, a need for improvement in management, and the need to look at the Navy's feeding systems of the future. This, coupled with the continuing requirements for greater at-sea endurance, is creating an even stronger demand for more effective subsistence management.

Today, there are 668 Navy enlisted dining facilities, of which more than 80 per cent are afloat. The entire system currently feeds more than 184,000 persons per day, with food alone costing approximately $203 million annually. Considering all costs, including labor, maintenance, and depreciation, the Navy's feeding program costs nearly $1 million per day. On an adjusted scale, this makes the Navy the 10th largest feeding operation in the United States.

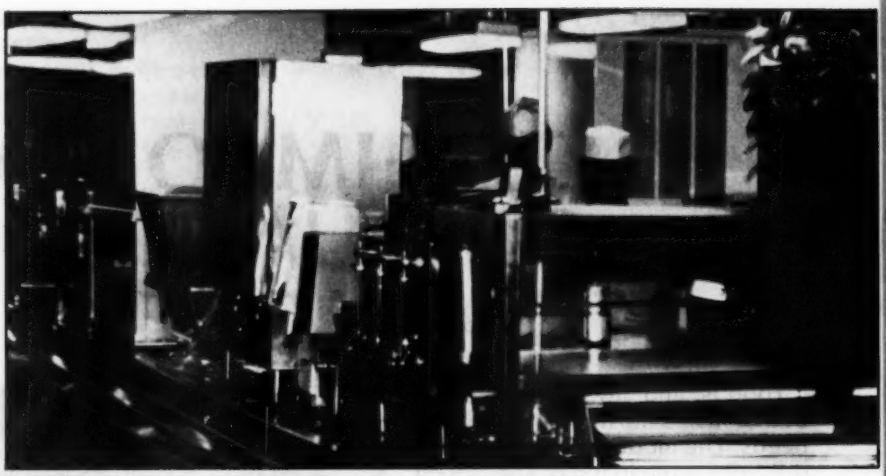
There are approximately 23,000 people working in the Navy food service program. This includes NAVFSSO staff personnel, members of the various food management teams, Supply Corps officers in primary food service billets, Civil Service and contractor employees ashore, and military enlisted personnel afloat and ashore.

The Navy's food service operation is a worldwide responsibility. NAVFSSO's goal in this responsibility is to ensure the continuing existence of an integrated food service system which is characterized by general excellence. Inherent in the system are food service operations which match the varying needs and capabilities of our ships, shore

activities, and personnel. It must also properly balance the need for central direction with the required capability for the exercise of sound management judgment at the local level.

The Navy Ration Law, which was established by Congress in 1794, has been modified over the years and currently prescribes the quantitative allowances for each enlisted person. Since 1933, the law has remained virtually unchanged with only the addition of fruit, vegetable juices and enriched flour. Navy is currently trying to change the law to allow the use of margarine in the Navy ration. This is consistent with the current civilian consumption of margarine vice butter since the product is nutritionally adequate, and this action will place the Navy and Marine Corps on equal footing with the other Military Services who are authorized to use margarine. It is also a money-saving action, since surplus butter is no longer available, and exclusive use of regular butter at today's inflated prices has increased Navy costs considerably.

Until 1958, Navy activities locally priced the value of food items consumed against the Navy Ration Law, which required the use of a complex and cumbersome system of computation. The final result gave each facility a total monetary allowance for feeding its personnel. Today the ration law is applied differently. NAVFSSO centrally calculates the monetary allowance quarterly and disseminates the basic rate to all activities operating dining facilities. Thus, all local computations are eliminated. For example, the authorized food quantities for the period October 1 through December 31 1974 converted to a basic daily food allowance (per man, per day) of $2.45 for Continental United States and $2.48 for afloat and overseas.



Navy food service has come a long way toward improving the eating atmosphere for its enlisted force. Above is a modern dining facility aboard the USS Dixon as compared to the kitchen activity aboard the USS Sangamon in April 1945.

One of the most effective means for administering the food service program is through the use of the Navy Food Management Teams. These teams are located in strategic points to enhance their ability to provide assistance to those activities within their geographical area. There are five operational teams located in Norfolk, Virginia; Charleston, South Carolina; Jacksonville, Florida; San Diego, California; and Hawaii.

The teams' mission is to provide on-the-job training right in the dining facility. They teach food preparation and service techniques, as well as record keeping, stock control, menu preparation, and all topics related to food service operations. Training is provided by the do-as-I-do-method, as team members roll up their sleeves and work with regular food service personnel.

During fiscal year 1974, the teams made 306 regular visits, held 13 seminars, and conducted over 300 special assistance and follow-up visits. They visited well over half of all enlisted dining facilities.

The effectiveness of the teams cannot be measured by monetary standards. However, trends in Navy food service do reflect changes which can be directly attributed to team efforts. Perhaps the most obvious change is in the increasingly stiff competition for the Ney Memorial Awards which are presented each year for food service excellence.

Prior to 1958, Navy cooks and bakers received little recognition for their work. In that year the

Food Service Executives Association proposed an annual award for the Navy's best enlisted dining facilities. The Secretary of the Navy endorsed the proposal, and the Ney Memorial Awards Program was born.

Competition for the Ney Award is on a year-round basis, and winners must display sustained excellence. Nominations are submitted by major commands in four categories—three afloat (small, medium, and large) and one ashore.

First place winners receive bronze plaques. But the real winner is the Navy enlisted person, who benefits most from the competition.

NAVFSSO has a number of continuing involvements which assist dining facilities in maintaining the Navy's reputation as a "great feeder." Some of these involvements include:

-Development of operating policies and procedures.

-Control of authorized food commodities by review and approval of all food item specifications.

-Administration of, on behalf of the Navy, the Department of Defense Standardization Program for Subsistence.

-Coordination of production and user tests on new or improved food items with the Defense Personnel Support Center, the DoD Food R&D Laboratories, and other Services.

-Development of objectives, plans, policies and operating procedures for the overall Navy food service operation, including recommendations for implementation of Navy and DoD directives.

-Maintenance, with the help of the other Services, of the standardized Armed Forces Recipe Service, which consists of approximately 1,200 recipes.

-Publication of the "Food Service Operations" manual (NAVSUP Pub 421) as a general guide to food service operations and as an on-the-job training manual. It describes ways of obtaining maximum use of food, equipment, and personnel.

-Publication of a similar manual for Food Service Management (NAVSUP Pub 486). These two manuals cover everything anyone needs to know to run a fully successful food service program.

-Publication of the Mess Hall Master-at-Arms (MA) Handbook to assist the MA in his duties and responsibilities in the dining facility.

-Publication of the Navy Food Service magazine which is sent to all commands in the Navy. This is an ideal vehicle for stimulating command interest and for exchanging and publicizing new ideas in food service.

-In addition to the Food Management Teams, NAVFSSO is active in other areas of professional training. Ten food service training films have been written and produced covering such subjects as food preparation, sanitation, equipment, management, etc. They have proven to be excellent training devices.

-Technical guidance is also provided for Navy commissaryman school curriculums and for the food service officers' course at the Naval Supply Corps School at Athens, Georgia. Periodically Navy correspondence courses for the commissaryman rating are reviewed and updated and Navy examinations for advancement are reviewed to make sure that questions are current and applicable.

-Also in the training area, an in-depth study is being undertaken to evaluate Navy food service training. This study was initiated at NAVFSSO and will be conducted by the Army's Natick Laboratories, which is responsible for the overall Department of Defense Research, Development, Testing and Engineering program (food service). The scope of the study will include not only improved training methods, but methods which will be applicable for use by all four Services.

-Expansion of the use of custom foods to eliminate waste, reduce bulk, eliminate the need for refrigeration, speed up replenishment at sea and save time and labor in preparation. At present there are more than 80 custom foods in the system, and additional items are continually being evaluated for possible use.

-In the civilianization program, over 80 per cent of our goal to replace all naval personnel working as attendants with civilians has been attained. The contract messmen program originally included only scullery and general janitorial duties, but now it includes some food handling. Not only has this program benefited morale, but the men are now able to devote full time to their ratings.

-In the area of design and improvement of facilities, great strides are being made. Habitability and human features are now an integral part of design and construction. NAVFSSO works hand-in-glove with ship designers, and as a result, new ships of the future will have much care given to the design and layout of their food service spaces. Joint study is currently underway to determine the feasibility of backfitting all older ships, by class, with new and modern equipment—to improve efficiency and enhance habitability. In the meantime, commanding officers are being encouraged to put high priority on rehabilitating their food service facilities during overhaul periods.

-Ashore, NAVFSSO has identified a need for approximately $13 million in equipment replacement and installation and

overall habitability improvement to facilities. To date, approximately 45 special projects have been initiated and $5.5 million spent for improvement. There are 40 projects in five MCON years totalling over $27 million in MCON funds and $3.1 million in initial outfitting funds.

These are only a few of the more significant continuing programs that are in progress at NAVFSSO. Additionally, there are several new and adventurous ideas being studied by the Navy and the Department of Defense which could have a significant impact on feeding programs. Some of these are:

-The Central Galley Concept. This is an innovated concept for centralized food preparation afloat in which all of the ship's food service areas will be serviced from a common galley, bakery, and scullery. The basic intent is to minimize resources and space devoted to food preparation aboard ship. This idea has been approved for inclusion in the Sea Control Ship.

-The BAS/a la carte food service program. This is a system in which all enlisted personnel would be given a basic allowance for subsistence in lieu of rations-in-kind. This would permit members to purchase food items they desire from the dining facility on a cash basis. This concept has been tested by the Air Force, and DoD has requested that each of the Military Services conduct a similar test of this BAS/a la carte system.

-Continuing RDT&E Program. This program is accomplished through a Navy lieutenant commander billet established as the Navy representative on the Joint Technical Staff (JTS) for the DoD food RDT&E program. This officer is assigned to Natick Laboratories as a full-time representative to establish and maintain effective communication between the Natick Laboratories and NAVFSSO on all aspects of the food RDT&E program with particular emphasis on current and future doctrinal concepts.

-Uniform Ration Cost Study. One of the current Natick Laboratories efforts being conducted is a study to update the Navy Ration Law which serves as the basis for providing subsistence-in-kind via a uniform ration cost system. The objectives are to develop an improved ration allowance and cost system, define a more effective food service management system, and develop cost benefit analytical procedures. Included are studies to determine food preferences and frequency of item service.

The above are only a few of the planned ongoing efforts for improving Navy food service. But, no matter how extensive the changes may be, the basic rule will still prevail—good food when properly prepared and served is one of the Navy's best morale and health builders. Whatever is accomplished to improve living conditions and food service extends throughout the entire naval establishment, and eventually its effect extends through the oncoming generations who will man the Navy of the future.

For the Navy's patrons, food service ashore must be made more attractive and more satisfying than any other food service available to them in the community. Aboard ship there is no personal service more dynamic than that rendered by the enlisted dining facility. This is where the enlisted members appear three times daily, seven days a week, and it should be a pleasant and satisfying experience each and every time.

The Navy's food service program is dedicated to meeting these challenges.

THE M

The responsibility for the U Marine Corps Food Service Program is assigned to Headquarters, USMC. Local fo service operations are organize installation level, with the exception being the major commands (divisions, wings o force service regiments) havin their internal structure when are tenants on an installation.

At larger USMC installations there is a food service officer is a special staff officer and is normally assigned within the component that provides logis support. The food service offic responsible for overall food se operations, including equipm personnel, all supplies and subsistence items. Although he special staff officer to the installation commander, he normally reports directly to an intermediate staff officer who operational control of the logi force. His responsibility for personnel is as consultant on assignment and control of coo and bakers reporting into the activity or requiring reassignm for proper distribution to appropriate units that operate dining facilities.

The financial control of the f service operation is never delegated below the installatio commander, although the operational control is passed subordinate commanders who personnel subsist in an assign dining facility.

The number of Marine Corp dining facilities ranges betwee 138 and 145, with 141 presentl operation. The total number o dollars to be spent for food th year will be approximately $58

The Services' Only Self-Contained Program

...ARINE CORPS' FOOD SERVICE

million. This includes war reserve stocks that have to be rotated on an annual basis, and the normal meal combat individual (MCI) consumption.

USMC installations that feed less than 350 personnel do not normally have a food service officer assigned. When commands aren't authorized a food service officer, as in the cases of the smaller commands, the food service operation is normally the responsibility of the supply officer, who usually does not have a food service background. However, in those cases the Marine Corps has a high level of food service expertise, because well qualified enlisted dining facility managers are assigned to those organizations.

The food service officer is responsible for the overall operation. However, another very important Marine in the food service operations is the food service technician. These technicians are considered to be the backbone of a viable food service program, because they provide the vital link between the food service officers and the dining facility staffs. The food technicians are senior enlisted personnel who create an open field of communications within the food service field and are to be commended for their accomplishments toward a more effective program.

There are three food management teams in the USMC. On the East Coast, the food management team is stationed at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and receives administrative support from that command. There is a West Coast food management team stationed at Camp Pendleton, California, and a Western Pacific (WestPac) food management team stationed at Camp Butler, Okinawa. Although, these three teams are assigned to the cited installations for administrative purposes, they are under the operational control of Headquarters, USMC.

Modern, pleasant decor and good food are the keys to this up-to-date dining facility at the Marine barracks, Concord, California.

Their annual schedule calls for a visit to each dining facility in their area for a period of from one to two weeks for purposes of giving instruction in all phases of food service management and operations. Although not inspectors, the teams do write a formal report after each visit to an installation. They present recommendations that are intended to improve the operation.

All members of the food teams, including officers, are working members, and consequently when they visit different dining facilities they are prepared to instruct and

assist wherever necessary in the food service operation. They can be considered as the eyes and ears of the USMC Food Service Program.

The Marine Corps W.P.T. Hill Award for food service excellence recognizes outstanding dining facilities on an annual basis. Prior to the arrival of the evaluation team which consist of three military personnel from Headquarters, USMC, within the Continental United States (CONUS), there has been an elimination process to identify those dining facilities that will compete as semifinalists.

The overseas evaluations are accomplished by a team designated by the Commanding General, Fleet Marine Forces, Pacific. Awards are made in two categories within CONUS and two within WestPac. The categories are for small dining facilities, feeding less than 350 personnel and for large dining facilities, feeding 351 or more.

In making the evaluations 12 different areas are considered: management, food preparation, sanitation, serving techniques, food acceptability, effectiveness of the food service training program, conservation measures, equipment, receiving and storage procedures, management supervision, personnel hygeine and the facility improvement program.

The USMC Food Service Excellence Program differs from those of the other Military Services in that the program is conducted entirely within the Marine Corps, while the other Services have industry participation.

The Marine Corps seeks to improve the food service program through a number of techniques. They are trying to get a higher calibre of individual for the occupational field, train him or her better, provide better equipment and improve working conditions. The improvement in food service can not all be accomplished through new facilities, modern equipment or qualities of the devoted food service worker.

In consideration of that, it has been found that the patron (Marine being fed) requires an education on the elements of food service to include appreciation for, and the conservation of, food. It appears that this training is not presented at any other level in today's society. This is not a Marine Corps initiative; for it has been a DoD requirement for at least eight years. However the Marine Corps believes that it is far ahead of the other Services in this training area because its food management teams emphasize it on their annual visits, and assist the commands in developing effective programs.

Each commanding officer having operational control of a dining facility is required to execute the patron food service education program on the elements of food service.

The Marine Corps doesn't overlook the fact that continued improvement requires recipes that are time tested and proven. The Armed Forces Recipe Service, developed by dietetic experts from all Services, is the bible for this aspect of the program.

As regards the different types of menus that can be served, the installation commander has the authority to have a local menu planning board prepare menus and feature special nights for special foods. If the commander desires other than standard items, he may submit his request to USMC headquarters, where appropriate authority will be granted if the request is considered to meet the objective of improving the quality of the food and still not exceed the Basic Daily Food Allowance (BDFA).

The BDFA is totally adequate when there is sound management at the dining facility level and the command has an effective program on the control of plate waste. The word adequate must be stressed because it is not ample, and sufficient reserves to permit special meals for special occasions will not be generated unless the dining facility feeds a large percentage of attractive, but relatively inexpensive meals, usually at noon. A safe gauge to utilize here is that the cost to feed will not exceed the BDFA, and reserves generated will be no more than 5 per cent below the BDFA. When the cost to feed is more than 5 per cent below the BDFA and a large percentage of personnel are not accepting the less costly meals, the warning light should be recognized. This will immediately call for a review of headcount practices and billing procedures.

Local menus are not developed totally by local choice. The Marine Corps has a professionally developed 42 Day Armed Forces Menu for a guide that ensures nutritional adequacy. Although no standard menu would be appropriate, or satisfactory for all installations for all meals, many of the menus in the 42 Day Armed Forces Menu are used without change by local menu boards. When personnel review installation menus that have changed all meals in the 42 Day Armed Forces Menu, they observe a menu that is probably not adequate, and has probably resulted in less than the most desirable variety for menu selection. This is corrected during staff visits, IG inspections and Food Management Team visits.

Marine Corps Order 10110.35 furnished guidelines to commanders of what can be done within the dining facilities to improve decor. These guidelines dictate that USMC dining facilities should be comparable to first class commercial feeding establishments.

The Army Modernizes with

MENU FLEXIBILITY in FIRST-CLASS CAFETERIAS

Tenderizing meat cuts brings into play one step in modern food processing. Five hundred needles pierce meat and sever the tough-connected tissue during this processing at the Army Natick Laboratories, Natick, Massachusetts.

The Army has many programs designed to achieve better food service. For instance the new Army ration credit system (ARCS) stresses increased management at the dining facility level. Under the previous system, food items for preplanned meals were merely issued in bulk to the dining facility based on the anticipated attendance for a particular meal. The dining facility manager must now requisition his own subsistence inventory on an item basis, just as any civilian restaurant does.

This gives him flexibility to adjust menus to conform more closely with the eating preferences of his diners. Using the Army master menu as a meal planning and nutrition guide, he may now increase or decrease quantities of any items shown, or make substitutions at his own discretion within cost constraints.

The types of foods available to the soldier have not gone unscrutinized in the improvement program being conducted by the Army's food service. The Army wants to be sure that the soldier has the same types of foods made available to him in his dining facility as he would have in civilian life. An example of this effort is the addition of a wide variety of ethnic and specialty items on military menus in the last few years. The Army has also added short order items such as hamburgers, hot dogs, pizzas, French fries, and milkshakes.

The Army is very much aware that good food becomes better when eaten in pleasant surroundings. A "Dining Facility Modernization Program" is underway to upgrade dining facilities with modern state-of-the-art preparation equipment, with serving lines to support the regular, short-order and specialty menus. There will also be properly equipped and configured self-service areas for beverages, condiments, salads, desserts; all of this with a decor similar to a first-class cafeteria that is attractive but not plush.

Major improvements have been made in the Army's food service training program too. A formal career program has been developed which clearly defines progressive education and skill requirements. The Army is working closely with the American Culinary Federation to achieve a certification program for its personnel. These certificates, indicating skill levels reached through education, training, and experience, will be recognized by the food industry and thus afford Army personnel a second career opportunity when leaving the military service.

The Army has taken many long, meaningful steps forward in its food service operations, knowing that its soldiers are continually comparing its food service with its civilian counterparts.

Air Force Food Service Continues to Search for

INNOVATIONS, INVENTIONS & FEEDBACK SYSTEMS

An examination of food service in the Air Force today provides a dramatic contrast to the food service of yesterday. When the Air Force became a separate service in 1947, there existed an understandable attitude of expediency toward food service. Out of necessity, considerations of quality training, control, adequate equipment and dining atmosphere were sacrificed. The Air Force inherited a food service system primarily designed to feed a large number of airmen as rapidly as possible with little regard for satisfaction as long as their basic need for food was met.

By the 1950's, a basic philosophy of attention to, and consideration of, the individual was established. This supplanted an era of complacency and provided a springboard for the improvements that followed.

At first, improvements were visual. The old steel mess trays disappeared and were replaced by glass tableware. Small four-man tables began to replace the ten-man or larger tables and benches. Today, the decor in Air Force dining rooms has been elevated to a point where most facilities are beginning to compare favorably with commercial feeding establishments.

By the 1960's, emphasis was on menu variety and closely monitored food costs. As the background and experience of airmen changed, so did their needs. Their eating habits were being influenced by the fast food chains spreading across the country. As a result, short-order lines came into being and multiple entrees appeared on the regular serving line. Aggressive mass production techniques, required to feed large numbers in a short period of time, were being modified to accommodate comparatively fewer customers over longer meal periods. Food service personnel were becoming managers as well as cooks.

This change in concept required that the Air Force develop the necessary training to insure competent supervision. Efforts to improve training have culminated in the development of a Cooks School at Lowry Air Force Base, Colorado. Additionally, the new Middle-Management School, also at Lowry Air Force Base, graduated its first class on August 30, 1974. This course was developed and designed to assist shift-leaders and dining hall supervisors in being more effective managers.

By the 1970's, we had already instituted a unique subsistence data collection system known as the Consumer Level Quality Audit Program (COLEQUAP). It is the only subsistence data collection system in the DoD which gathers data on food items directly from the consumer. COLEQUAP provides feedback data on selected subsistence items with regard to consumer acceptance, food service adaptability, and the measurement of specification quality characteristics. Food service personnel are expected to do their best and COLEQUAP attempts to insure that the best possible products are provided to facilitate and realize that expectation.

Any time food service personnel determine that food is unfit for its intended use and the condition is due to factors beyond normal base control, an Unsatisfactory Material Report (UMR) can be initiated to proper authorities and corrective action achieved. Another vehicle influencing subsistence use and acquisitions is the Menu Utilization Report (MUR) completed three times a year by all Air Force activities. The purpose of the USAF MUR is to obtain information on changes desired in food items, new food items desired by food service, and other information pertinent to the USAF Worldwide Menu.

In addition to requests contained in USAF MURs, other sources and considerations contribute to the identification of new food items and subsequently shape future Worldwide Menus. Area food service workshops provide food service personnel the opportunity to express their needs of food items commonly used at their installation. The introduction of new food items into our system is based on consumer popularity and demand, beneficial cost comparisons, ease of preparation and serving and product packaging.

The USAF Worldwide Menu became effective in January 1973 and represented a dramatic departure from the Joint Army-Air Force Monthly Master Menu. Prior to publication of the Worldwide Menu it was necessary to supplement the Monthly Master

Air Force food service personnel have taken great strides to make the dining facilities more cheerful places to eat.

Menu for the Continental United States (CONUS) with three additional monthly menus designed to meet the needs for other geographical areas. The Worldwide Menu meets the needs of all Air Force personnel throughout the world and remains capable of responding to changes in subsistence availability within four months as opposed to 18 months under the previous system.

Changes have been made in food service and will continue to be made. The Air Force will continue to search for those innovations, inventions and feedback systems that will serve to improve the food service support we are able to provide the varied missions of the Air Force. In the face of limited resources, it becomes imperative that the Air Force be able to identify those factors and conditions of our current food service system that seem to have the greatest effect on the airman working and eating in our dining facilities. Once Air Force personnel are able to identify those areas influencing dining hall attendance and worker productivity, priority areas can be developed for improving food service operations so that limited resources may be more effectively utilized. It is on this premise that the tests at Travis Air Force Base, California; Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina; and Loring Air Force Base, Maine, have been and continue to be conducted and analyzed in terms of feasibility and adaptability to Air Force needs.

Testing of the a la carte concept at Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina, has been so successful it has been expanded to Loring Air Force Base, Maine. The Loring test began January 1, 1975.

The Travis and Shaw tests provide the first documented evidence of applicability and feasibility of heretofore preconceived food service concepts. The fundamental premise of the Travis test was that all facets of food service must be oriented toward and responsive to the customer. To achieve this end, meal hours were extended, specialty menus were offered on a daily basis, an automated headcount system was employed, a self-service flight line food service operation was established, a modular fast food service facility was positioned adjacent to the billeting area, and dining halls underwent a face-lifting in dining areas to reflect a more casual, less-regimented atmosphere.

The Shaw test was generated when Tactical Air Command (TAC) became concerned that it was losing its nucleus of trained food service specialists. Food service manning is dependent upon the number of meals served in the dining halls; when attendance went down, so did the number of food service authorizations. From this impetus sprang a most controversial, but constructive examination of the present food service system. Primary features of the Shaw test included a $450,000 dining hall modification project, placing all airmen on separate rations, individual item pricing and cash payment for food items, plus a number of innovative techniques in food feeding and dining hall operation. The separate rations plan has proved to be the most popular of the changes made at Shaw. During the test period, raw food costs at Shaw have averaged considerably less than TAC-wide costs, due to the minimizing of food waste.

The Shaw test will continue through FY 1975 enabling additional testing of the computerized pricing system and other improved food feeding techniques and demonstrating the ability to operate under a more normal food service operation, relatively free of the personnel excesses initially required to establish and conduct the testing program.

So successful has the attempt been to improve the quality of life for airmen at Shaw, that Headquarters, USAF has approved an expansion of the BAS/a la carte concept to Loring Air Force Base, Maine. The Loring test, scheduled to begin January 1, 1975, will provide experience gained from a remote, northern tier base under the different mission and environment of another major command—Strategic Air Command (SAC). While the concept necessitates the conversion of about 800 enlisted personnel at Loring Air Force Base from subsistence-in-kind to BAS for the last half of FY 1975, facility and equipment conversion costs will be kept to a minimum to evaluate the concept's feasibility throughout the Air Force.

Food service today is not the food service of yesterday, and its dynamic character guarantees a quicker, evolutionary tomorrow.

COMMANDERS DIGEST

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